1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

individual needs, half a coco-nut shell makes an excellent cup or bowl, leaves may be used as plates, and a shell (usually a species of cyrena, Pl. 38, no. 6) serves many of the purposes for which we use a spoon. These, with the women's knife made of black-lip oyster-shell and the large trade knives which are now universal, constitute the chief utensils employed in preparing and eating meals. Fingers and teeth are the aids to feeding most in evidence.

When ready to serve, the pot with its contents is placed on the verandah, or on the ground, where every one can reach to put his hand in and pick out a chunk of taro or a handful of tiny shell-fish. These people will put their hands into water that is only just off the boil, and take out a taro so hot that when they passed me my share I invariably dropped it, till I learned to wrap a leaf round my hand before accepting it. Similarly they will plunge a hand into a potful of shell-fish immediately it has been taken off the fire. Fish that has been cooked in leaves will be laid out on the verandah, still resting on its leaf-covering; if the fish are small each person will take one or more, according to the quantity available, if large, pieces will be torn off with the fingers. Sometimes a number of cooked taro or the portions of a disjointed opossum will be passed round in a coco-nut-leaf basket. If you have taken more than you want you pass the remainder of the taro or the half-picked bone to some one else, probably one of the children, with the remark '*Komanē a libul*', 'My belly is full'. I never saw any one put partly eaten food back into the pot. There are always plenty of dogs and pigs in attendance, who see to it that no fragments are left on the ground when the meal is over. The pigs are specially fed with the taro peelings and any other bits accruing from the preparation of the meal, being called up by name by the housewife for this purpose. The dogs fare more meagrely, being purposely kept on short rations in order that they may be fierce in hunting.

SMOKING

Smoking is universally indulged in, even by quite small children. Apart from the merest babies I do not remember meeting any one who did not smoke. It is a common sight to see a little girl of perhaps five or six strutting about with a pipe in her mouth, which may or may not be alight (Pl. 37*b*).

Tobacco is grown in small quantities and cured by being hung in bundles in the sun, but everybody much prefers the variety to

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

be obtained from white men, which is a kind of plug twist, mixed with molasses, and made up into sticks about 6 inches long. The same word (*wuruts*) is used for both native and trade tobacco. Portions of stick-tobacco are twisted off and crumbled, and are smoked either in pipes or in the form of cigarettes, made of any kind of paper that happens to be available. The newspapers sent to me from home were in great demand for this purpose. I once gave a man a half-sheet of the *Observer*, and was amused to see him roll it obliquely into a cigarette of enormous length, which he smoked with great satisfaction, to the envy of the onlookers, and somehow succeeded in keeping alight. The height of smoking luxury, however, consists in a tin of Capstan and a packet of cigarette papers. When they have no tobacco they will pick up a piece of smouldering wood from a fire, crush it into their pipes, and smoke it with apparent content. They like to mix with their tobacco a resinous gum (*tagon*) collected from the trunk of the canarium almond.

Pipes are made in certain villages where a suitable supply of clay can be obtained. One man on Petats was considered especially skilful. He got his clay from the neighbourhood of a river on the island of Buka. It appears to be similar to that used for pottery-making on the opposite side of the island. The work is usually done inside the hut, so that the clay will not dry too quickly. The bowl is shaped in the finger, and the stems are moulded round a thin cane which is then pulled out. The pipes are baked by being laid in the embers of an ordinary house fire. They are also made in some of the villages on Bougainville, especially in the Kunua district, but not in any of those on the north coast, the people of which obtain them by barter. In the Kunua villages I saw some with patterns incised on the bowls, but as a rule those in common use have plain bowls, with slight differences of shape in the projecting piece at the bottom. The length of the stems varies a little, but is generally not more than 3 or 4 inches.

CHEWING THE BETEL-MIXTURE

Just as universal as the habit of smoking is that of areca-nut chewing (*gas*), which begins perhaps even earlier, since babies a few months old are given the husks of the areca-nut to suck. I have seen a man spit his mouthful into the hand of a child aged perhaps six, who chewed it for a while and then transferred it to